As a precondition to the enrichment of experience and the enhancement of consciousness, Henry James lets his positive heroes and heroines withdraw from the incommodious necessity of common-place facts and vulgar choices. These characters, such as Christopher Nev^rran, Isabel Archer, Lambert Strether, and Milly Teale, are in one manner or another excluded from the superficial drama of life, and they are sent out of the wcrld, as it were, to acquire the moral strength of achieved self-knowledge in order to judge the world and its ways. Their estimation of the world, however, does not result in an abandonment of the world, but rather in an affirmation of the world's possibilities as seen in the light of higher system of values.

In the reflected splendour of their individual refinement, the world acquires a power wedded to glory. The final act of judgement itself becomes transformed into a movement of charity which has divested itself cf the ambiguities of judgement. Nowhere does Henry James seek to resolve the paradoxes of life; he rather illuminates and humanizes them by dramatically relating them to the freedom of refired selfhood which must ultimately discover its own inner core of truth at the centre of reality. Henry James was not concerned with social or artistic success. He had no gargantuan appetite for the fleeting facts of momentary social conduct and ephemeral human behaviour. He was more actively concerned with the interest that life evokes through its indestructible essences as they offer themselves yieldingly to the percipient vision. The quest for the enduring sub-stance of life must be fulfilled through the habit of responding to its pulses and its influences across all barriers, social, ethical, or spiri-tual. Refinement, as Henry James developed and dramatised the idea, includes these three factors of his imagination; firstly, the universality of human experience, particularly in its tragic areas dominated by suffering, sacrifice, deprivation and loneliness; secondly, the supreme obligation of the responsive individual to discover the indestructible

life which must lie at the heart of the life hurt; and, thirdly, the acquisition of a capacity to penetrate through the labyrinths of superficial fact into the resources of truth.

Such being the Jamesian concept of human refinement, James achieved nothing short of a radical reorientation of the fictional art as it freed itself from the impermanent, insignificant element of reality and attached itself to the permanent, and significant elements of truth. Although James had little active faith in the conventional creed of the church, his vision had in it the core of a non-conforming, indivi-